

WORKFORCE HORIZONS

Planning Tomorrow's Workforce Today

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TELECOMMUTING TIPS FROM SOUTH CAROLINA

Telecommuting is a flexible work arrangement that allows an employee to work from home or an alternate workplace during all or some part of the work week. It is usually a mixture of working at home and the office with varying amounts of time spent in each location.

The state of South Carolina has established a telecommuting program. Here are some general guidelines they offer.

1. Establish an agency-wide telecommuting policy
2. Identify specific categories of positions that are appropriate for telecommuting
3. Have the employee and his or her supervisor jointly complete a telecommuter application to

determine the employee's eligibility for telecommuting

4. Require a written telecommuting agreement between the employee and the agency outlining responsibilities and reporting requirements
5. Make sure the written agreement includes a provision for maintaining security of confidential materials and data and access to computer files
6. Have the telecommuting employee complete a safety checklist certifying that the home or alternate worksite complies with health and safety requirements and is free from hazards or dangers to the employee or to the safe operation of any state-owned equipment used there.

Some of the most important aspects of the telecommuting "contract" involve safety and security issues. For example, the alternate workplace is an extension of the primary workplace; therefore, workers' compensation will continue to exist for the employee when performing official work duties at the alternate work site during approved telecommuting hours, and the employee should be required to report any work related injuries to his or her supervisor immediately. However, the agreement should stipulate that the employee is liable for any injuries or damages to property of

third parties or members of the employee's family that occur if the alternate worksite is in the employee's home.

Other safety provisions that should be included on a safety checklist or in the written agreement include such things as:

- ✓ Sufficient electrical outlets to support all required equipment
- ✓ Electrical equipment is free from hazard such as frayed wires or exposed wires
- ✓ Computer equipment is connected to a surge protector
- ✓ The alternate worksite has a working smoke detector and fire extinguisher
- ✓ The agency has the right to inspect the alternate worksite and to gain access to or retrieve agency equipment if necessary

There are also security concerns that should be addressed in a written telecommuting agreement. Obviously a provision should be included for maintaining confidentiality of paper and computer files and passwords. If the employee is using state-owned computer equipment at the alternate worksite, the equipment should only be used for legitimate business purposes and only the telecommuting employee should have access to or use the equipment. It should be secure from unauthorized use. If the employee is using his or her own computer, provisions must be made to ensure that no unauthorized person has access to any files or work-related information the employee has on the computer.

Not all employees or jobs lend themselves to telecommuting. Obviously an employee must be self-motivated, independent and able to work productively on their own to be a successful telecommuter. In addition,

WORKFORCE PLANNING MAXIM OF THE DAY

"Don't be afraid to see what you see." – Ronald Reagan

certain types of jobs or tasks are more suited to telecommuting than others.

Some tasks most suited to telecommuting are:

- Data Processing
- Computer oriented tasks (programming, data entry, word processing, etc.)
- Telephone-intensive tasks
- Reviewing cases
- Research and policy development
- Intensive thinking and writing tasks (policies, programs, papers, etc.)
- Project based work
- Computer-based training

For more information on telecommuting go to the South Carolina website [Office of Human Resources - Telecommuting Guidelines](#) which contains samples of a telecommuting policy, application form, agreement between agency and employee and a safety checklist.

GEORGIA'S G-COMPS DOING COMPETENCIES THE RIGHT WAY

The state of Georgia has developed an outstanding comprehensive and detailed competency model for its state workforce. It is described in G-COMPS, Georgia's Competency Dictionary for Workforce Planning. G-COMPS was originally developed to assist Georgia state agencies to complete mandatory FY 2003 workforce planning requirements. G-COMPS provides a consistent framework for state agencies to determine the competencies required for a

particular job and appraise the current and future competency levels of their workforce.

The Georgia Competency Dictionary and scales represent a blending of a number of previously existing models. The model defines 32 competencies each broken down further with a 5-level behavioral scale related to proficiency in the competency.

For convenience, the competencies are grouped into eight broader clusters. The eight clusters are:

1. Basic Communication
2. Personal Effectiveness
3. Relating to People
4. Collaborating and Leading
5. Action and Results
6. Analytical and Conceptual
7. Environmental Acumen
8. Specialized Knowledge

In 2005, the G-COMPS Dictionary and scales were revised to add an additional set of impact scales to evaluate another dimension of competency known as *scope of impact*.

An example of a competency from the G-COMPS Dictionary in the Personal Effectiveness cluster is “Flexibility” which is defined as follows including the 5 levels of behavioral proficiency:

Flexibility – Degree to which an individual accepts change in job requirements, schedules, or work environments.

Level 1: Does not accept changes. Is argumentative in response to changes/adaptations. Ignores information that would cause change.

Level 2: Accepts changes reluctantly. Makes changes only when told to do so.

Waits until told to change or adapt rather than taking proactive steps.

Level 3: Changes as needed to get the job done. Accepts changes in job requirements, schedules, or work environments as part of job. Remains calm and focused during times of change. Makes changes based on new credible information. Maintains productivity when implementing new or altered procedures.

Level 4: Embraces change voluntarily. Willing and open to change. Develops new procedures in response to change. Adjusts schedules and timelines to accomplish goals and objectives in response to change.

Level 5: Anticipates and prepares for change. Proactively adapts to new opportunities or risks. Seeks information from multiple sources that may cause change. Flourishes in high-change environments.

For more information on Georgia’s competency model go to [G-COMPS](#)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The only thing we know about the future is that it will be different.” – Peter F. Drucker

CREDITS

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Purpose: The purpose of the [Workforce Horizons](#) is to educate readers about workforce planning issues and best practices, inform them about upcoming Civil Service workshops and training related to workforce planning and to provide practical job aids to assist agencies with workforce planning.

Comments and submissions: We welcome questions about workforce planning and suggestions for improvements to the newsletter as well as submissions of articles about what your agency is doing in workforce planning. Questions and comments should be sent to the editor.

Current and Back Issues may be viewed by going to the workforce planning portal of the Civil Service web page at www.civilservice.louisiana.gov